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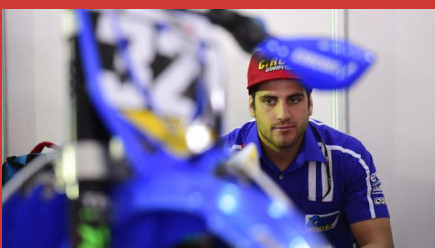
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COOL SHOT



RACING CATCH UP



RIDER OF THE MONTH

Samuele Bernardini



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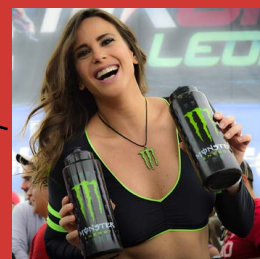
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MONSTER
GIRLS

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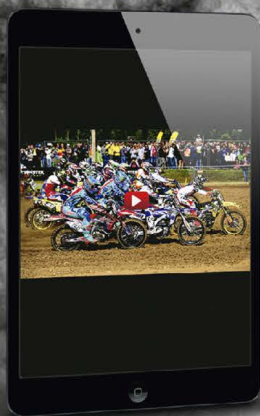
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EDITORIAL



Giuseppe Luongo
President of Youthstream Group

Dear MXGP Friends,

While the absolute supremacy of Herlings in MX2 is obvious, MXGP becomes more and more undecided by the minute. At the moment the 2 young riders, who are already World Champions, Fevbre and Gajser, seem the best candidates for the MXGP title, but with the World Championship returning to Europe on more traditional kinds of tracks Cairoli, Bobryshev, Nagl, Van Horebeek and Desalle will have their cards to play. So far the racing in the MXGP class is simply outstanding, espe-

cially for the MXGP of Argentina fans were glued to their TV screens. For 2nd position in the MX2 class the racing is just as exciting, and next year when Herlings abandons MX2 for MXGP the battle for 1st place in MX2 will be utterly crazy with all the young riders who have been starved of victory for so long.

Both the Motocross World and European Championships are in very good health, for every round in Europe there are huge numbers of entries for every class (European and World). It's absolutely fantastic that

an average of 350 riders are entering per event with the large majority of these riders being very young. Having so many young riders entering the European Championships ensures the quality of racing in the World Championship classes for the future.

Due to the fact the whole weekends' activities, including Saturdays' European races, the Women's World Championship race and MX2 / MXGP World Championship qualifying races, are broadcasted live on MXGP-TV.com we have seen an important increase in the fans' and



sponsors' interest in all the European Championships and also in the Women's World Championship.

Now we will have 3 Grand Prix events in a row, Latvia, Germany and Trentino, on 3 completely different types of terrains. Kegums in Latvia is soft and sandy; Teutschenthal in Germany is normally a hard track but this year the local organizer has made a great deal of work to the track and loads of new dirt and sand has been brought in so the quality of soil has significantly improved, this will provide for better, quality racing, also a new watering system has been put in place to help with better maintenance during the weekend; then,

Trentino in Italy, in one of the most beautiful scenarios with the high cliffs from the Alps as the spectacular backdrop, is a classical hard-pack circuit making it technically demanding for the riders, over the last years some superb racing has materialized

on this track, this year the organizer has made a lot of investment into improving the venue, they have especially concentrated on improving the access roads, expanding the paddock and parking areas to better welcome the teams and fans.








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HOLESHOT



Flying to the Fox



What a year 2016 is turning out to be. We are barely one third of the way in and already we have seen some of the craziest, action-packed racing out on track in what looks to be one of the most memorable seasons for quite some time. And don't even get us started with the Fox Holeshot competition! That alone is just insane, and here's why.

After three rounds - Qatar, Thailand and Europe (Valkenswaard) KTM were leading the way in MX2 with five holeshots on the board, with Pauls Jonass picking up three (one at each round), while his teammate Jeffrey Herlings had two; one from Thailand and one from Europe. The other holey was collected by Kawasaki's Dylan Ferrandis in Race 2, Qatar, the only Japanese machine to do so in this contest.

So, coming into Patagonia, Argentina round four, it was a foregone conclusion to expect orange to be up front again, right? Wrong! In fact, for whatever reason the Red Bull Ka-toom's of PJ41 and JH84 were not quite on song down south, as Aleksandr Tonkov picked up his second qualifying holeshot of the year, which we know doesn't count but worth mentioning anyway.

In the two moto's though it was Max Anstie who blew everyone else out of the water picking up both Fox Holeshot 'Black Plates' on offer to get Husqvarna on the board and a sign of things to come from the white corner of the paddock. But could he do it again when we headed north to Leon, Mexico?

Well, at this point we could get all scientific on your little booty's and go off on some sort of rant, but we'll keep it real short and say that Anstie made up one half of the Fox Holeshot squad in Leon, with the other two thirds going to Jeffrey Herlings, so one apiece for Husky and KTM.

In terms of the overall competition though it looks like this in MX2:

MX2 Fox Holeshot Standings

(top 3) - After 5 Rounds

Jeffrey HERLINGS 3

Pauls JONASS 3

Max ANSTIE 3



FOX HOLESHOT AWARD



MOTO 1
MAX ANSTIE

MOTO 2
JEFFREY HERLINGS

MXGP OF LEON | 17/04/16



Another thing worth pointing out here is that in MX2 KTM have 6 of the opening 10 moto starts, with Husky on 3 and Kawasaki on one, but look how tight it is at the top though, with three riders sharing the spoils after five rounds.

In MXGP the Fox Holeshot contest has so far been nothing short of sensational, with six different winners from the first six moto starts, so surely it had to be a matter of time before this trend was broken.

After picking up the Fox Holeshot in Race 2 at Valkenswaard Antonio Caroli crossed the line level with his teammate Glenn Coldenhoff in the qualifying race in Patagonia and was looking to become the first two-time Fox winner come raceday. In MXGP Race 1 it looked initially as if Max Nagl got his hands on the coveted 'Black Plate' but after further scrutiny it was indeed Cairoli who was given the nod, by a gnats knacker over the German to go ahead in the

MXGP Fox holeshot contest, the first time the Sicilian had led anything in 2016.

In Race 2 though it was Tim Gajser who powered clear showing Honda's dominance in a straight line once more, picking up his second Black Plate of the season. Not only that, the Slovenian cruised to Race 2 victory to claim his second overall victory of the year, showing that Honda also has it when it matters.

In Leon, Gajser picked up from where he left off, albeit with a qualifying race holeshot! Come raceday though and in Race 1, unlike Patagonia one week prior, this time Max Nagl made no mistake to take his first Fox Holeshot of the season, thus getting Husqvarna on the board in the process.

Come Race 2, and Holey Moley, it was Nagl at the double and as the saying goes, Fox Holeshots are like buses; you wait eight races to get one and suddenly

two come at once! All of a sudden the Fox Holeshot contest in MXGP has come alive and after six winners from the opening six starts, suddenly we have three riders - Nagl, Gajser and Cairoli - at the top of the standings with two holey's each.

From a manufacturers stand point, Honda have now taken five Fox Holeshots from ten moto starts, a 50% strike rate, which is pretty good going; Husqvarna and KTM have two each while Yamaha has Valentin Guillod to thank for the one he picked up in Thailand Race 2. Next stop, Latvia where the short straight into a 180° right will be quite the challenge.

MXGP Fox Holeshot Standings

(top 3) - After 5 Rounds

Tim GAJSER 2

Antonio CAIROLI 2

Max NAGL 2



FOX HOLESHOT AWARD



MOTO 1
MAX NAGL

MOTO 2
MAX NAGL

MXGP OF LEON | 17/04/16



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THE SPICE OF LIFE

If variety IS the spice of life, then the 2016 MXGP season is tastier than ever. During the month of April we voyaged to America, a continent that is known for its dramatic geographical extremes, for the fourth and fifth rounds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, where in Argentina and Mexico the youngsters, or young stars, Honda Gariboldi's Tim Gajser and Red Bull KTM Factory Racing's Jeffrey Herlings raised the stakes.





ARGENTINA

There are some places on earth where just standing and looking outwards at the world, at your surroundings, can be a mind blowing yet humbling experience. Villa la Angostura, the village that hosts the MXGP of Patagonia-Argentina, is one of those places. Yes, it is a hike and a half to get there since most of us that are involved in MXGP are based in Europe, but it is a journey well worth making, for the beauty of the location is unmatched and any written description will never do it justice.

If the location wasn't enough to put someone in good spirits, you can bet your boots the track would have. Any motocross enthusiast, from a fan to a rider, loves the look and

layout of the Patagonian circuit. It would be near impossible to find a rider that dislikes its wide and flowing nature, big playful jumps and nature resistant soil, even the guy that came last.

Another thing the Patagonian MXGP had going for it was its proximity to the border of Chile. This attracted an abundance of fans from both countries, Argentina and Chile, whose passion for sport in general, that includes motorsport, is second to none. Friday night, before the gates had opened to the public down at the track, which is situated approximately 5 kilometers from the alpine style town of Villa la Angostura, Neuquen, an epic media event was organized. Freestyle motocrossers

opened the show as the sun went down on the picturesque village, while the MXGP and MX2 riders rolled out to show some love for the South American fans.

Come race day and the usually peaceful and undisturbed venue was brought to life as the aristocracy of MXGP went bar-to-bar. Honda Gariboldi's Tim Gajser took a landslide victory with a third place in race one and a win in race two for his third grand prix overall of the season. The Slovenian rookie now tops the statistics in all categories but one for this season. He has the most pole positions, has led the most laps, has won the most races and in turn, has the most MXGP round victories. The only statistic he isn't



first rank on is the number of rounds raced with the red plate. That belongs to Monster Energy Yamaha Factory Racing's Romain Febvre.

Speaking of the defending champ, Febvre, he had a 'mare of a weekend as he struggled to keep his YZ450FM rubber side down. Despite the adversity, 461 managed to salvage enough spots in both races to finish fourth overall, which given the circumstances, was an impressive result, but at the same time overwhelmingly disappointing since it broke his phenomenal sixteen round

podium streak.

What is also not seen on the result sheet is that Team HRC's Evgeny Bobryshev was the fastest rider around Patagonia, but like Febvre, ate it too many times. On a brighter note, Red Bull KTM Factory Racing's Antonio Cairoli made a welcomed return to the podium, his first in almost an entire year, while fellow MXGP veteran Rockstar Energy Husqvarna Factory Racing's Max Nagl took his first race win of the season and paired that with a fourth for his second consecutive podium finish, third.

In MX2, Red Bull KTM Factory Racing's Jeffrey Herlings gave everyone something to chew on with his unmatched speed and flawless skillset. Suzuki World MX2's Jeremy Seewer has fast become a podium fixture although he did have his work cut out for him on his mission to second overall while Wilvo Standing Construct Yamaha's Aleksandr Tonkov pinned it for third.

MEXICO

Making its third appearance in the FIM Motocross World Championship in so many years was the MXGP of Leon, Mex-





ico. Framed by cactus and tumbleweed, the track in Leon is something special. It was designed and built by MXGP's track crew, which means it embraces everything from off-camber corners to sweeping turns, all the way through to a series of doubles, a triple, some tabletops and a dragons back style wave section.

The MXGP of Leon has seen a new winner in both classes, MXGP and MX2, each and every year. The only pattern is, there is no pattern! Last year Romain Febvre absolutely killed it! He won the first race by more than 45 seconds and then added another victory to that for a perfect 50 point score. It wasn't as easy for the champ

this time round, although he did manage to win the first race, in the second race he was beaten fair and square by the Slovenian wonder Tim Gajser.

Tim Gajser has fast become the biggest threat to Febvre's throne and it is mind-blowing to watch him race the 450 with so much confidence, aggression and finesse. Meanwhile, Max Nagl took his third podium on the bounce while recognition has to be given to Monster Energy Kawasaki's Clement Desalle who rounded out the top five despite not being entirely fit since he snapped his radius two weeks before Qatar and had it operated on.

'Once your heart has been broken, it grows back bigger' is how the saying goes and Jeffrey Herlings is the epitome of that. The Flying Dutchman, or The Bullet if you prefer, has been to hell and back over the last two seasons. He raced in Leon in 2014 with a broken femur in attempt to win the title. He didn't win it. He lost by a miniscule 4 points to his then teammate Jordi Tixier. It was one of the most heroic, but at the same time craziest, races ever; one that broke his heart and the world's. Last year he didn't even make it to Mexico, he crashed out of round



thirteen, the MXGP of Czech Republic, and angrily went off the radar for the rest of the season. Going into 2016, it was a mystery what type of 'Bullet' the 84 would be, but we have fast learned that it is lethal and pretty much untouchable.

A lot of people are left scratching their heads at the speed of Herlings, and even more so in Mexico since the altitude is so high, which means the bikes have a loss of power, and Jeff is not a small dude. But if you take a minute to actually watch him ride, you will see that in those conditions he is still at an advantage because of the unbelievable

amount of momentum he carries into the corners, he barely has to hit the gas. He's just super smooth and that is why he is unbeatable at the moment.

Behind Herlings, second place feels as good as a win. So 'the winner', kind of, was Jeremy Seewer, although the most impressive performance was that of the young and audacious Russian, Vsevelod Brylyakov, who had the ride of his life that weekend with a second place in the first race and a sixth in the final moto, after stacking it on the first lap, for his first ever podium finish. The kid who rides for Monster Energy DRT Kawasaki, is one of the most friendly and

down-to-earth riders in the paddock, so to see him make his own dream come true was pretty cool.

BACK TO EUROPE

That puts a wrap on the fly-aways until September when we box everything back up and head for the USA where the MXGP will rock out at an all new and exciting stadium venue in Charlotte on the west coast before heading east for the final round of the series, at the famed venue of Glen Helen. In the meantime, we are Europe bound where the championship is bound to intensify as the riders hit their home soil and some of the oldest and most traditional venues.





NORTH LAKE
GARDA

FIM Motocross World Championship

Standings

MXGP CHAMP. STANDINGS

1. R. Febvre (FRA, **YAM**), 219 points
2. T. Gajser (SLO, **HON**), 216 p.
3. A. Cairoli (ITA, **KTM**), 171 p.
4. E. Bobryshev (RUS, **HON**), 170 p
5. M. Nagl (GER, **HUS**), 165 p.
6. J. VanHorebeek (BEL, **YAM**), 162 p.
7. K. Strijbos (BEL, **SUZ**), 127 p.
8. S. Simpson (GBR, **KTM**), 122 p.
9. G. Coldenhoff (NED, **KTM**), 104 p.
10. T. Searle (GBR, **KAW**), 98 p.



MX2 CHAMP. STANDINGS

1. J. Herlings (NED, **KTM**), 250 points
2. J. Seewer (SUI, **SUZ**), 192 p.
3. P. Jonass (LAT, **KTM**), 166 p.
4. A. Tonkov (RUS, **HUS**), 163 p.
5. P. Petrov (BUL, **KAW**), 132 p.
6. B. Paturel (FRA, **YAM**), 126 p.
7. V. Brylyakov (RUS, **KAW**), 121 p.
8. S. Bernardini (ITA, **TM**), 117 p.
9. A. Östlund (SWE, **YAM**), 89 p.
10. M. Anstie (GBR, **HUS**), 82 p.

MXGP MANUFACTURERS

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. Yamaha | 220 points |
| 2. Honda | 218 points |
| 3. KTM | 178 points |
| 4. Husqvarna | 176 points |
| 5. Suzuki | 139 points |
| 6. Kawasaki | 119 points |



MX2 MANUFACTURERS

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. KTM | 250 points |
| 2. Suzuki | 192 points |
| 3. Yamaha | 180 points |
| 4. Kawasaki | 168 points |
| 5. Husqvarna | 138 points |
| 6. TM | 117 points |
| 7. Honda | 100 points |

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@TimGajser243 does it again. GP win #3 in @mxgp. WOW

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Tim Matthijs on studio show, great interview, @mxgpNice episode!

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@mxgp And we have a view! Thanks for solving the problem! Can't miss a second of it

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@charlierchris23

@a nice folk mexican dance during the youthstream event today in Leon @mxgp @IceOneRacing

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@Just booked tickets to watch @MaxAnstie win the @britmxgrandprix at Matterley Basin. @mxgp @HusqvarnaMXGP

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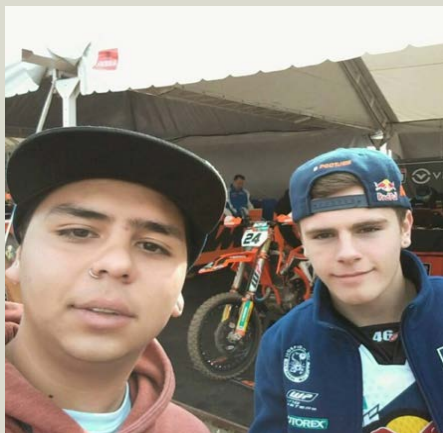
Crazy racing between Febvre, Gajser and Cairoli in the opening laps of the MXGP of Patagonia Argentina



Some fine racing in MX2 in Mexico:



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Samuele BERNARDINI BACK IN THE GAME







For those of you who follow MXGP week-in, week-out you can't have helped but notice that there is a new kid in town running up front on a regular basis, turning a few heads as well as becoming a real pain in the backsides of some of the more established stars of MX2. He goes by the name of Samuele Bernardini, races for the TM Factory Racing Team and is our MXGP Magazine 'Rider of the Month.'

But are we that surprised, really? Most of us probably are, but those that know, know! And when you look at his career a little more closely it was really only a matter of time before we expected to see the stocky

Italian doing what he is doing in 2016, which is challenging for top fives on a regular basis. So, where has he suddenly come from, where has he been?

Samuele Bernardini first burst on to the scene in 2010 in the EMX125 European Championship on a KTM as a wide-eyed 15 year-old looking to make his mark. And, for a first-timer in this highly competitive category Bernardini did what so many Italian's did before him, challenging for podiums almost immediately. In a season that was dominated by Jordi Tixier, Samuele's confidence was boosted at the very first round in Italy with a 2nd position in race two, right

after a disappointing 14th in race one, netting him 5th overall. It was a similar story at round two at Bellpuig where 8-3 saw him take 4th overall. His first podium eventually came in Sweden, finishing 3rd overall with a 2-6, and even though it was to be his only visit to the box that year, it was enough to leave him feeling like he belonged there.

The following season, 2011, Bernardini was on fire and in a title race with fellow Italian Simone Zecchina. Round one, Bulgaria, belonged to Zecchina with Bernardini 2nd. Round two was Bernardini's with Zecchina 2nd. Round three, and again it was Zecchi-

na-Bernardini, the two riders providing us with some thrilling action out on track.

Round four at Loket belonged to Bernardini with his first ever double-moto win to take over the lead by eleven points, but a wrist injury sustained at the FIM Junior Motocross World Championship at Cingoli, Italy, meant he missed the round at Matterley Basin and with it the chance of becoming 125cc European Champion.

Not winning that title seemed to leave a massive dent in his confidence, and his move into the EMX250 category the following year saw him finish in a lowly 16th overall, missing two

rounds as well as recording no scores in four other moto's. The only sign that the super-fast Bernardini still existed came at the final round at Faenza where he took a 3rd in race one.

With that in mind maybe he should have considered a second season in EMX250 but the kid was in a hurry and entered MX2 the following season, 2013, which turned out to be even more disastrous than his EMX250 campaign, finishing 49th after entering only five rounds; From the outside it was painful to watch especially when you look at riders that shone in EMX125 like Tixier and Gajser for instance, that went on to do the same every time they

moved on.

With the introduction of the EMX300 class in 2014 Bernardini now racing for TM was at rock-bottom and if he wanted to be taken seriously again he needed to stand out from the crowd, and that is exactly what he did, and from the seven rounds he raced, he took ten moto wins, (4 double moto victories) two second places, a fifth and a sixth, missing the overall podium just once in Spain. Finally, Bernardini bagged himself a European championship title.

Still only 20 years-old and armed with a pocket full of confidence, once again Bernardini found himself





entering into the world of MX2. But once again, something wasn't right. He missed the first five rounds due to a knee injury, and upon his return failed to score in the next six moto's. His first points came at Maggiora where he went 10-10, and from there he was in the points on a regular basis. By the time we reached Loket four rounds later his TM was pulling massive holeshots, allowing him to run at the front with the best MX2 riders in the world, even if it was for just a few laps, but it was enough to get the fire burning in his belly once more.

During the winter of 2015 big decisions and bigger changes were made at TM; Bernardini started to train

more seriously having visited the Olympic Centre in Rome where he underwent a professional fitness test for the first time. TM introduced a new engine, one from Moto3, which they'd been developing for about two years. Changes to the way they set up the suspension helped the overall handling capabilities of the bike as well and all of a sudden, TM and Bernardini were back in the game.

Of the ten races we have had so far in 2016 Bernardini has finished outside the top ten just twice and in Patagonia, Argentina, achieved a career best finish in MX2, going 5-6 for 4th overall. And he is certainly not afraid to mix it with the very best as we saw in Leon, where he mus-

cled his way past Pauls Jonass and Aleksandr Tonkov, two riders who are not shy of dishing it out themselves. The kid is turning out to be a real honey badger.



Walking round the paddock, you can see Bernardini has changed. You can see it in his demeanour, the 21 year-old has a permanent smile on his face at the moment, which is great to see. The Bernardini from EMX125 is back, full of confidence, enjoying his racing, enjoying being back at the sharp end and don't be surprised if we see him climbing on to the podium sometime soon.



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LEON









EMX250 & EMX300 round one rippers





The European Championship is the biggest and most important amateur championship in the world. It has already paved the way for many big names such as Ken Roczen, Jordi Tixier, Tim Gajser, Pauls Jonass, just to name a few, and it continues to breed future world champions year after year.

Each and every year all three of the main European Championships grow. The EMX125 presented by FMF Racing is

the first major step young hopefuls take fresh off the small wheels, 85cc, where as the EMX250 is the premier class and the final step a talented rider can take before entering MX2 or MXGP. Meanwhile the EMX300 presented by FMF Racing keeps the two-stroke dream alive and provides a lower cost alternative to world-class racing.

On Easter weekend at the world-renowned circuit of

Valkenswaard, The Netherlands, the curtains were raised on the 2016 European Championships EMX250 and EMX300, which saw the rise of new heroes and the fall of old ones.

EMX250

The strongest program on the day, in the premier class EMX250, was that of Rockstar Husqvarna Factory Racing's Conrad Mewse, the Brit that finished fourth in the EMX125 series last year.



Mewse also finished second at the 2015 FIM Junior Motocross World Championship behind Maxime Renaux, who has also moved to the EMX250 class, but had a weekend to forget with a DNF in both races due to bike problems. Back to Mewse, the rookie was phenomenal onboard his all-new Husqy and took to the brutally rough circuit of Valkenswaard like a seasoned pro for a double race victory and the championship lead. Not a bad effort for the kid that only managed to win one race in the 125cc class last year.

Even Heibye was the dark horse at the opener. The Norwegian rider was not on anyone's radar especially since he hasn't had any ma-

jor European Championship success in the past. Well, that all changed last month for the lad that runs the number 24, he killed it all weekend to finish second overall ahead of Bodo Schmidt Motosports Thomas Kjer Olsen, who is one of the more familiar names on the entry list.

And then there is the new kid on the block, Monster Energy Kawasaki's Hunter Lawrence. H-Law has quite a story behind him with his whole family shutting up shop in Australia, selling their farm so Hunter and his little brother Jett, who will race the EMX85 championship later this year, can have the best opportunity at one day winning the world championship. Hunter was haulin'

ass in both races, although he did have a few sketchy moments, which could be put down to first round jitters or dodgy suspension settings. Nevertheless, he whipped out a solid second place in race one, and in style when he caught Mewse on the final lap and challenged for the lead. In race two he binned it while leading, but still set the fastest laptime in that race and has definitely got the skills and potential to be something great.

Kevin Wouts is also a bit of an old dog, he's been around a while and managed to wrap up the top five, while the winner of the EMX250 championship last year, J-Tech Honda's Nick Kouwenberg finished seventh.





EMX300

Yentl Martens, the son of former FIM Motocross World Champ Jacky Martens, is no slug in any conditions. The tall and leggy Belgian arguably should have won the championship last year but ended up breaking his scaphoid in Spain. As most people in the sport know, that tiny little bone in the wrist, the Scaphoid is a complete pain in the butt to injure. It takes ages to heal and for a lot of people it causes long lasting complications. Yentl hit the couch immediately and didn't even bother trying to ride or train with the injury. Turns out it was a good move because he came out swinging at round one and is looking like he is embracing that same winning form again this year.

GL12 racing's Lewis Gregory is a strong candidate for the title. One of the coolest things about the Brit and the team he rides for is that they are die-hard two-stroke fans. If Bob, the owner of the team, could banish four-strokes from the earth, he wouldn't even think twice. Lewis broke up a class stacked with Dutch and Belgian talent and managed to raise the Union Jack above the second step of the podium.

Since a Belgian won on Dutch soil, the weight of the world rested on the shoulders of Mike Kras who was the fastest Dutchman in the class. Kras won the first race by a comfortable margin but chucked it all

away when he went down in the first corner in race two and then stacked it again whilst coming through traffic. He did rip his front fender off, which for anyone that rides, knows it's quite weird to ride without it especially on a track as ruthless as Valkenswaard. Anyway, he got back to sixth and was able to uncork a bottle of Champa's in third.

Belgian Mike Vandestraeten and Dutchman Kevin Van Geldrop did it for the locals rounding out the top five.

The second round of the European Championships EMX250 and EMX300, and the opening round of the EMX125 will take place on the weekend of May 1st in the sand of Kegums, Latvia.



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Rolf Tibblin

The Pioneer

Swedish legend Rolf Tibblin is very much one of the pioneers of the FIM Motocross World Championship scene. Along with a long list of fellow countrymen, it was the Scandinavian riders who owned the FIM Motocross World Championships in the 1950's and 60's.

Following victories by names such as Bill Nilsson (1957 and 60) and Sten Lundin (1959 and 61), Tibblin would also add two 500cc world championships to his name in 1962 and 1963. He would in fact become the first rider in the sport's history to win two world motocross championships in a row.

Tibblin also claimed 22 GP victories in the 500cc class, a position that sits him among the all-time greats, the same amount of victories in the class as British legends Dave Thorpe and Jeff Smith.

Born in Stockholm on May 7, 1937, Tibblin was a strong build man who could outperform all competitors in any physical exercise. With an interest in both soccer and ice hockey, Tibblin claims today that it was just a coincidence that he chose

motorcycles as a hobby. Many felt he could have been world class on both of those other sports, but it was the two wheeled action that took his fancy.

The son of a scrap-yard lumberman, Tibblin had to work hard from an early age, and this built up his physical condition and stamina. As a young man, Tibblin recalls: "I felt that the team players were complaining about almost everything instead of trying to win games, and since my parents had strict rules about behavior, I had to work when others were training."

"My dad told me there was no money in football, of course he was wrong," Tibblin said. "One of my uncles helped me buy a bike. No racing they said, it was too expensive. I worked in a scrap yard and I raced without the knowledge of my parents, and in fact I won the European championship without my parents' support. To become a professional racer, most people don't really know what it takes to become a racer, it takes a lot of work."

Despite having little time for training Tibblin never had any trouble getting his place in his soccer and ice hockey teams and he always outperformed his teammates. It was during this time that he also started hanging out with young motorcycle friends.

"They were more open and easy going so we socialized much better", Tibblin remembers. As a consequence, he joined a motorcycle club west of Stockholm, where he claims he was 'pretty poor in the saddle'. But good partnerships and plenty of practice spurred him on and he began to pick up speed. By the time he was 19 he had built his physical strength to high standards and this meant Tibblin managed to keep up his pace when others started to get tired.

In 1958 Tibblin contested the European 250cc Motocross Championship (the predecessor of the World 250cc Motocross Championship), and finished second aboard a Husqvarna. He returned in 1959 and won the European 250cc Motocross Championship with the



Husqvarna factory team.

In 1960 Tibblin moved to the ranks of the FIM 500cc Motocross World Championship, and he began the season with a lot of confidence and good performances. His Husqvarna was very competitive and he managed to win the two first Grand Prix races in Austria and in France where he finished in third place aboard a Husqvarna.

Two years later he captured the top prize in motocross: the 1962 500cc Motocross World Championship title. The most difficult GP of the 1962 season was undoubtedly the Czech Grand Prix where everybody was exhausted after the two heats.

"It just proved that my hard training paid off well," Tibblin said. "I looked at other sportsman, from wrestlers, footballers, and skaters to find out how to get really fit. I called up these different

sportsmen and I asked them. All had different fitness levels for different parts of their bodies, and I tried to combine a lot of those things, to what I felt would suit my body and my sport."

He went on to win half of the GP races that season and was 500cc World Champion for the first time in his life. Still racing for the Husqvarna factory, the following year went smoothly and Rolf won five of the twelve rounds.

This resulted in another world title and as mentioned, it was the first time in the history of the sport that one rider had taken victory in the half litre class for two successive years. Tibblin also won the famous Novemberkasan five times in a row from 1960 to 1964, an incredible record at the time. Tibblin was also member of Sweden's championship winning Motocross of Nations team in 1961 and 1962.

At around the same time Tibblin won

the first individual class victory at the International Six Days Trophy, that year held in Bad Aussee in Austria. The following year Tibblin slipped to fifth place in the 500cc class championship.

In 1964 Tibblin changed from Husqvarna to Hedlund, prepared by technician Nils Hedlund, who also had been involved in tuning his previous Husqvarna's. This season turned out to be a giant battle between Tibblin and British rider Jeff Smith. The title was on a razor's edge going into the decider in San Sebastian, Spain. But luck didn't favor Tibblin and he had to be content with second place after his front wheel gave up during the last lap.

By 1965, the era of the two strokes had arrived and Tibblin once again switched brands and this time riding for CZ, where he finished third behind Smith and Paul Friedrichs. In the 1966 season he finished second aboard the CZ.





Smith who would of course win 500cc titles in 1964 and 65 and also collected a long list of GP victories, had huge respect for his rival, and wasn't short on giving the Swede compliments. "The man who designed and made Tibblin's 1964 championship mount was Nils Hedlund," Smith said. "It was really the last great motocross machine before the two-strokes came flooding in. It took a strong, fit man to handle such a machine and Tibblin was the man to do it. He was the first person in motocross to take training seriously and I was privileged to know him and learn some of his methods. He was also a very humorous person, easy to get along with and always 'very, very, sorry' if he knocked you down!"

After having raced in Europe for some years he was looking for new challenges and he took his family

to the United States where he began racing successfully again. Tibblin soon became a popular name in the US after winning prestigious events like the Baja 1000 and the Mint 400. He also started a famous motocross school on the west coast, which became very popular among up-and-coming US riders.

One of Tibblin's pupils and friends was movie-star of the 1960s and 70s, Steve McQueen and they were often seen together riding in the desert sand. Tibblin stayed in the USA from 1971 to 1978 during which time he also raced buggies in the desert, also with great success. That of course is another story!

Tibblin is remembered as one of the more physically fit motocross racers of his day. In 1968 he wrote a book about fitness and training, which was published with help from U.S. motocross race promoter and

Husqvarna importer Edison Dye. His overall strength is illustrated in a mid-1970s photo showing Tibblin racing in the Hang Ten Grand Prix at Carlsbad Raceway in California. He is wearing a large, helmet-mounted camera and battery pack said to weigh nearly 50 lbs. Tibblin also raced with Gunnar Nilsson in the 1972 Baja 1000, and the pair won the motorcycle division aboard a Husqvarna with a time of 19 hours and 19 minutes.

After retiring from professional competition, Tibblin ran a motocross school in Southern California. He later moved to Sri Lanka, where he held membership with the Sri Lanka Association of Drivers and Riders (SLARDAR), and is credited with helping SLARDAR to enhance and uplift motor sports in Sri Lanka.

Story by Geoff Meyer and images by Kenneth Olausson

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Photo: P. Azevedo

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Paddock Talks

01/ One of the biggest fans of motocross, Oscar Piva from Argentina is a keen collector of jerseys. He's a big fan of Alex Puzar!

02/ The location of the media opportunity in Villa la Angostura, Argentina was breath taking.

03/ The Monster Energy Kawasaki boys do their bits for the fans in Argentina.

04/ Studio Show time with Paul Malin, Lisa Leyland & Wilvo Standing Contract Yamaha's Aleksandr Tonkov in Argentina.

05/ Kei Yamamoto wishes his Mom a Happy Birthday all the way from Mexico.

06/ The MXGP of Leon, Mexico, had a welcome presentation by the emblematic Calzada Arch in the centre of Leon.





Paddock Talks

07/ Another successful signing session inside the mall in Leon.

018/ Donny Emmeler, FMF Racing Owner, and former-world champion Danny LaPorte were out rooting for the FMF riders in Mexico.

09/ Fox simulations are so awesome.

10/ Team HRC sends their well wishes after the recent Kumamoto earthquakes.



QUESTIONS TO THE EDITOR

Hey guys,
I wish to buy an MXGP-TV season package, will WMX races be available LIVE on too?

Thanks,
Frank

Dear Frank,
Thank you for your interest in WMX Championship. I confirm WMX races will be showed live on MXGP-TV.com during the race weekend, so Race 1 on Saturday afternoon and Race 2 on Sunday morning.

Best Regards
MXGP

Hi MXGP-TV,
I see many pictures on www.mxgp.com showing autograph sessions held in the paddock during the race weekend. I'll be present at the MXGP of Spain in Talavera de la Reina, do I need a special pass to attend the signing sessions?

Thanks,
José

Hi José

Thank you for your question to MXGP. In order to enter the paddock you only need to have a 'paddock ticket' that you can purchase directly onsite.

See you there!

Regards
MXGP

Hi MXGP,
Which EMX Championships will be held at the MXGP of Trentino in Pietramurata?

Thanks,
Rolf

Hello Rolf,
Thank you for your question. At the MXGP of Trentino together with the MXGP and MX2 classes also the 2nd round of the EMX125 and the 4th round of EMX250 championships will be held. To check all the details on the 8th round of the FIM Motocross World Championship please follow this link: <http://www.mxgp.com/tracks/pietramurata>

All the best,
MXGP

Hi MXGP-TV,
How can I do to purchase the VIP GOLD SKYBOX Tickets for the MXGP of Germany?

Thanks,
Karola

Hi Karola
The VIP GOLD SKYBOX packages are available in the following link: <http://germany.motocross-viptickets.com/en/2934-germany-motocross-vip/>

Please check also the calendar section on www.mxgp.com for other VIP packages available.

Regards
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